

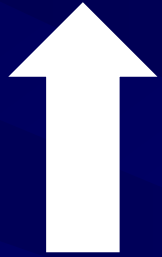


# Using Indigenous Ecological-Cultural Exchanges to Heal, Reduce the Risk of Disasters, and Adapt to Climate Change: Australian-Taiwan Indigenous Exchange Initiative

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Buergelt, P. T., Maypilama, L., Paton, D., Kasirisir, K., Lin, Y.-R., Pavavalung, E., Min, L., Zeng, B., Meredith, J.

# Global Challenges: Suffering & Surviving



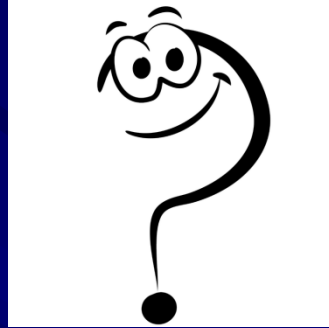
- disease & violence
- climate change & environmental destruction
- extreme natural events & disasters



# Source = Living in Disharmony with Nature

e.g., Clover, 2002; Berkes, Colding,  
& Folke, 2003; Grande, 2000;  
Griffith, 2015; Paton, Buergelt &  
Campbell, 2015; Buergelt et al.,  
2017; Reason, 1995; Sithole et al.,  
2017





Is it possible to live in harmony with nature & would that

- reduce the risk of disaster?
  - assist adapting to CC?



# evidence of living in harmony beliefs & practices in very different cultures

(e.g., Buergelt et al., 2017; Griffith, 2015; Paton et al., 2013, Paton, Bajek, Okada & McIvor, 2009; Paton & Jang, 2013; 2014; Sithole et al., 2017)



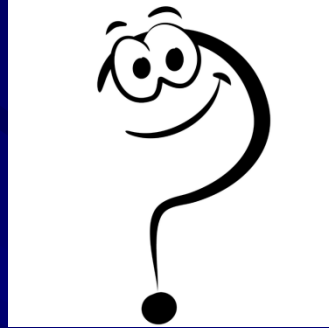
living in harmony exist  
&  
does work in practice

# Source of health/wellbeing and individual & collective adaptive capacities

- promotes & restores health & well-being
- enhances creativity, self-awareness, self-efficacy, self-esteem, perceptual skills, autonomy, vitality & positivity
- increases problem-solving
- enhances readiness & willingness to make decisions, change habits, act & take responsibility



(e.g., Conn, 1998; Faber et al., 2006; Eigner, 2001; Hartig, Kaiser & Bowler, 2001; Hwang, Kim & Jeng, 200; Kaplan, 1995; Person et al., 1998; Ulrich et al., 1991)



Is this knowledge sufficient to inspire people in Western cultures to adopt living in harmony with nature beliefs & practices?



**NO → Western Philosophical Worldview →  
Anthropocentric Beliefs & Actions**





# Western Cultures

totalitarian, positivistic,  
rational



anthropocentric beliefs

- nature challenges God's authority - oppose nature
- human & nature separated → no value
- nature = resource that can be justifiably exploited
- advocates capitalizing on natural resources

- economic advantages & lifestyle preferences take precedence over considering how RS with nature and linked actions increases the risk of ENE
- managed as an amenity = control nature
- increasingly disharmonious RS



## Western Cultures

totalitarian, positivistic,  
rational



anthropocentric beliefs

- nature challenges God's authority and will - oppose nature
- human & nature separated & no value
- nature = resource that can be justifiably exploited
- advocates capitalizing on natural resources

## Indigenous cultures

metaphysical, nature-based, unified, equalitarian



eco-centric beliefs

- nature created by metaphysical beings
- nature & humans = common origin, interdependent & allies
- recognise wisdom of nature & access to creative power
- if self & land separated = both suffer

- economic advantages & lifestyle preferences take precedence over considering how RS with nature and linked actions increases the risk of ENE
- managed as an amenity = control nature
- increasingly disharmonious RS

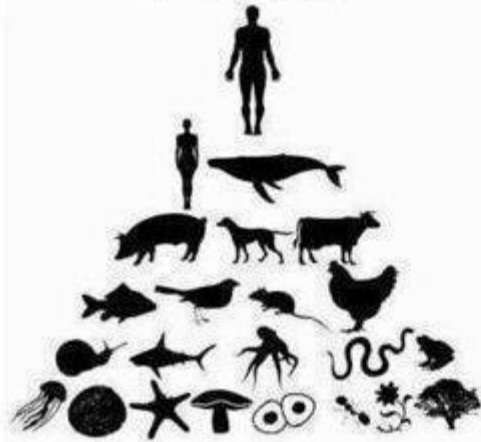


- feel responsible for country & needing to care for the land
- build up sophisticated knowledge of nature & humans
- created highly sophisticated cultural & social practices designed to ensure humans are living in harmony with nature





# EGO



# ECO



EGO VS. ECO



WE THE PEOPLE VS. WE ARE ONE

# Western worldview dysfunctional for our present circumstances

(Berry, 1993; Buergelt et al., 2017, in press; Griffith, 1995; O'Sullivan, 2002)



## Indigenous worldview functional → shift towards Indigenous worldview

- (re)learn to live in harmony with nature
- (re)build individual & collective adaptive capacities
- develop culturally & societally embedded practices that create living in harmony



Requires shift in fundamental beliefs that influence our relationship with nature

## Challenging to shift paradigms

- largely habitual & unconscious
- don't question them & how we got them
- make new experiences fit existing beliefs
- can't imagine we & society could be any other way

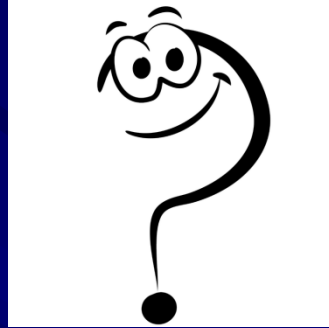


Breakdown typically only when

- ✓ current ways don't work anymore
- ✓ views of world are challenged



'disorienting dilemmas' or 'cognitive dissonance'  
opportunities for transformation



How could we create this  
paradigm shift?



# Transformative Learning



effective way to create paradigm shift from  
anthropocentric → eco-centric ways of thinking

# Transformative Learning

(Erhard et al., 2016; Mesirow, 1991, 1997, 2003, 2006; O'Sullivan, 2002; Willis, 2012)



experiencing deep structural shifts of consciousness in  
thinking, feeling & acting →  
suddenly, unexpectedly & profoundly understanding

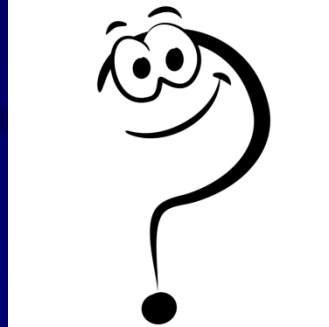


insight → a-ha moment's, eureka effect & awakening  
experiences

dramatically & permanently alters peoples' way of being & seeing themselves and the world → living in a new realm



- ✓ more expansive, discriminating & integrative frames of reference
- ✓ new level of awareness, authenticity & responsibility
- ✓ experience vitality, wonder & openness
- ✓ increases ability to change & act → effective social actions
- ✓ shifts how people relate to & with others and nature



How could we  
deliberately create & facilitate  
transformative processes?



# Transformative Education



# TL can result from



## rational processes

examining, reflecting,  
questioning & revising  
our perceptions of  
ourselves & the world



## ✓ transformative education

(Erhard et al., 2016; Mesirow, 1991,  
1997, 2003; O'Sullivan, 2002; Willis,  
2012)

## ✓ travelling – authentic, deep exchanges

(Buergelt, 2011; Higgins-Desbiolles, 2003,  
2006, 2009, 2012)

## extrarational ways of knowing

beyond cognitive thought

- ✓ symbolic, imaginative & emotional experiences
- ✓ creativity & imagination
- ✓ other processes outside of conscious awareness

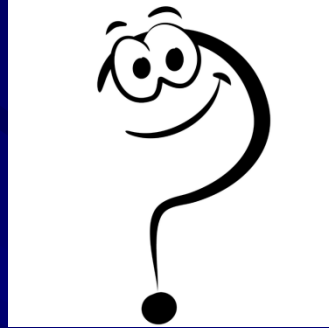


## ✓ nature

(Arvay, 2018; Buergelt et al., 2017; Faber et al.,  
2006; Kaplan, 1995; Kellert & Wilson, 1995; Person et  
al., 1998; Ulrich et al., 1991)

## ✓ arts

(Greene, 1995; Griffith, 2014; Hayes & Yorks, 2007;  
Kasl, 2012; Kock, 2013; Lange, 2012; Lawrence, 2009;  
Taylor & Taylor, 2012; Wesley, 2007)



How can we work together with  
Indigenous peoples to:

- strengthen Indigenous peoples &
- revive Indigenous knowledges & practices?

# Indigenist Community-based Action Research (PAR)



Indigenous ecological-cultural exchange  
to  
validate & revitalise Indigenous knowledges & practices  
to  
transform & heal, reduce the risk of disasters & (re)build  
adaptive capacity





Connecting  
Indigenous  
peoples

Arts  
sharing-  
making  
&  
(re)connecting  
with nature

Indigenous &  
non-Indigenous  
working  
together





- long-term
- emerging & two-way --> co-creating, co-implementing & co-evaluating → action learning
- interdisciplinary & intersectorial
- international
- Indigenist PAR
- representing findings
  - traditional & non-traditional → arts

(e.g., Buergelt et al., 2017; Henry, 2007; Dillon & Westbury, 2007; Purdie, Dudgeon & Walker, 2014; Veazie et al., 2001)









## 2017 → Building relationships & creating team

- 2017 - Seed Funding - \$ 10,000
- 2018 - Proof-of-concept - \$ 75,000





# 2018 June - Exchange in Taiwan



## 2018 August - Exchange in Australia





# 2019 April

## Researcher Exchange & Community Visits in Taiwan





# 2019 July - Taiwan-Australian Indigenous Knowledges Exchange Symposium



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高雄醫學大學

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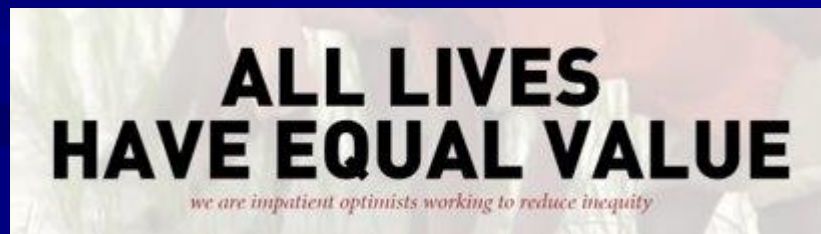


# 2019 August - Exchange in Tiwi Island



# Next step → 2020 National Funding Application

- Up to \$ 500,000 per year
- 3-5 years







“The earth is our mother.

Whatever befalls the earth befalls the sons and daughters of the earth. This we know. All things are connected. Humankind has not woven the web of life. We are but one thread within it. Whatever we do to the web we do to ourselves.”

— Chief Seattle

FB 7 AM